

really feel compelled to talk about where we are. And I'm heartened by the fact that both the Speaker and the minority leader spoke today about the need to come up with a solution.

Last spring, a guy named JIM COOPER, a Member from Tennessee, and I offered in response to the budget resolutions that were going on, something called "Simpson-Bowles." Simpson-Bowles is also known as the fiscal commission appointed by President Obama to look at the Nation's fiscal problems and come up with a set of recommendations.

The fact is that, even though it was President Obama's commission, he has not sought to implement one of the recommendations. Why? Because the recommendations are tough. There's a lot of tough love. You don't get into a situation as a country where you owe \$16 trillion and not have a solution that involves some difficulty and some sacrifice.

Included in there—and sadly, as you listen to the news accounts and you listen to some of the comments on the floor—the rhetoric is that those mean, nasty, nasty, mean Republicans are so interested in protecting the rich people in this country that they're not willing to increase and ask them to give just a little bit more. As one Republican who, in fact, says give the President the 2 percent of the rate increases that he's looking for—that still doesn't solve the problem, as Mr. WOODALL so eloquently indicated—I would come at it a different way.

If you let the Bush tax cuts expire on the top 2 percent of wage earners in this country, by the President's numbers—not my numbers, not some number that was pulled out of the campaign—it raises about \$900 billion over 10 years. Not being the sharpest knife in the drawer when it came to math when I was growing up, even I can do that. If you divide \$900 billion by 10 years, you wind up with \$90 billion a year. That \$90 billion a year is enough to run the Federal Government for 11 days.

The fiscal year around here ends on September 30. The President's proposal, in terms of sticking it to the rich people, making them pay a little bit more, gets you from the end of the fiscal year on September 30 to Columbus Day. Then what? It completely ignores the fact that two-thirds of the Federal budget—the Federal budget is \$3.6 trillion.

Two-thirds of the Federal budget is what is called the "middle class entitlements." It's Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and the interest on the debt. Those checks go out automatically. There is nothing that any Member of Congress has to vote on, unless you have a proposal, which Simpson-Bowles was and is.

You may hear the ads playing on the radio from the Nation's CEOs and others saying, We can't play small ball. We've got to come up with a package that actually heals the country.

If there is a sadness that I have and one of the reasons I'm leaving is, if you listen to the people talking, the President's advisers are saying, Well, you know, going over the fiscal cliff, we're putting the Republicans in this box and the 2 percent, that's good for the President. And you hear the Democrats saying, Listen, if we can have this discharge petition, make people not like Republicans, that's good for the Democratic Party as we go forward.

□ 1230

Some people, quite frankly, in my party—the Republican Party—are saying, Hey, listen. If we can paint the President and the Democrats as tax and spenders, then that's good for our party.

Mr. Speaker, when are people going to stop thinking about what's good for themselves or good for their parties and start thinking about what's good for America?

What's good for America is that we've got to come together and solve this problem, not just with taking that \$90 billion, which really is not much, but with reforming our Tax Code. We have to look at the programs of Social Security and Medicare, not to eviscerate them, not to throw Granny out on the street, not to not have health care for people in this country, but to make those programs not only viable today—but what about the people in their forties and thirties and twenties?

They did a survey a little while ago of high school seniors, and asked: What are you more likely to see, a Social Security check or a UFO, an unidentified flying object? More seniors picked the UFO, and with some of the leadership around here, I'm not surprised that they picked the UFO.

The fact of the matter is that we can't play small ball. When COOPER and I put this thing on the floor last spring, it got 38 votes; 26 Democrats and 12 Republicans were willing to stand up and do this. It's time for the big deal, and it's time for leadership.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE) at 2 p.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Throughout history, You have been ever present to all believers. In times of darkness, we readily turn on lights. Millions of Americans in this season have variously turned to the celebration of the Christmas season, with its trees and lights, and Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

Even so, in our political world, there remains the reality of considerable disagreement and contention. Where there is darkness here, send forth a spark of inspiration and grace to enlighten minds and warm hearts to respond to Your love for Your people.

Eternal Father of us all, fill Your children with the delight that comes from light. May we walk no longer in the darkness of distrust, but join together in mutual understanding and peace toward the common well-being of our Nation.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### TACKLING OUR OUT-OF-CONTROL SPENDING

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, the President and House Speaker BOEHNER met to discuss the impending fiscal cliff. The next